

**Great Pinot is
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PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Devoted to Pinoaficionados

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Summer Pinot Camp

Summer is prime time to visit vineyards and wineries. The vines are heavy with fruit and the anticipation of the coming harvest is high. Time to pull some leaves, spit some seeds, and kick some dirt. With this in mind, thirty members of the Crew went camping in mid-August and attended the Central Coast Pinot Camp.



One of the highlights of the trip was coffee enthusiast Wayne Nicklin showing up at The Cliffs Resort (he was staying several miles away) in the morning and brewing fresh coffee out of the back of his SUV.

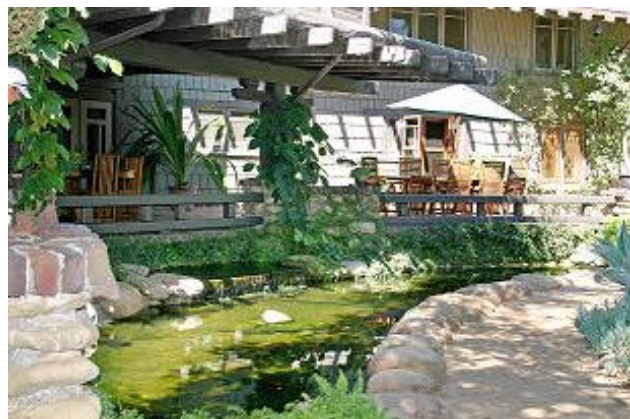


First stop was Casa Barranca in Ojai (the Pratt House is in the background above). Then on to Shell Beach where we checked into The Cliffs Resort. Friday night was an extensive tasting of Pinots and a barbecue outdoors at Wild Wood Winery in San Luis Obispo. Saturday the Crew spent the day at Bien Nacido Vineyard in Santa Maria with an extensive vineyard tour, Pinot tasting, and terrific lunch outdoors at the Bien Nacido Adobe. Saturday night was more Pinot and pizza at The Cliffs Resort. Sunday the Crew scattered to various designations, while I headed to Old Edna in the Edna Valley. The highlights of the Camp follow.

Casa Barranca

At Casa Barranca in Ojai, California, the ethos of open mind, open heart, and skilled hands is practiced in a very unique and peaceful setting. Owner Bill Moses is a New York transplant whose success in investment banking has allowed him to indulge his passion for winemaking. He discovered his love for wine in the 1980s while attending school in the South of France, where he lived with a family on their small farm and vineyard. It was here that he was first introduced to sustainable farming practices. Upon the urging of a long-time friend, he paid a visit to Ojai, and immediately became enthralled by the mountain peaks, orchards and majestic oaks that mark the landscape of this bucolic community that sits in a valley a short distance inland from Ventura. The famous Casa Barranca estate (also known as the Pratt House) subsequently came on the market and twelve years ago, Bill purchased Casa Barranca and moved west.

The Pratt House is widely recognized as one of the finest creations of the American Arts and Crafts Movement. It was commissioned by Charles and Mary Pratt to be designed by the most gifted architects of their time, the brothers Charles and Henry Greene who designed the Gamble House in Pasadena, California (the “ultimate bungalow” designed as a retirement home for an heir to the Proctor & Gamble fortune). Charles Pratt was an executive at Standard Oil and could afford the best. He chose a remarkable fifty-four acre site with commanding views of the surrounding mountain peaks and no expense was spared in building the house on the property. The Arts and Crafts Movement emphasized the use of natural materials and the goal was to make the transition from indoors to outdoors seamless. As we toured the house, we were struck by this ingenious design. All of the light fixtures in the Pratt House were designed by the Greenes and made by Tiffany. Bill jokes that the elaborate light fixture in the dining room is so coveted by collectors that he has been offered more money for that one fixture than he paid for the entire estate! The front of the Pratt House is seen below as Bill leads the tour. The back of the house features extensive decking, a koi pond, and gorgeous vistas of the surrounding mountains.



Bill formed the nonprofit Pratt House Foundation to support people of all ages who are seeking a healthy, balanced life. The Foundation puts on educational and therapeutic workshops and conduct research on the long-term efficacy of the programs on the overall health and well-being of those who attend. Interested groups can contact Casa Barranca for workshops such as arts and crafts therapy, yoga classes, dance classes, and personal development seminars. The entire Pratt House is available for rental to groups for retreats (805-646-7114). The beds are just fine (Prince, right).



Bill Moses learned his winemaking skills assisting with custom crush programs in the Central Coastal wine region. He has built a winery on the property using a century-old subterranean stone water cistern which was an original feature of this National Historic Landmark (left).

In building the tiered shelving system in the winery for his gravity racking protocol, he used craftsman who employed Old World skills like ‘mortis and tenun,’ and “scarf joinery,” and who finished the walls in a “board and batten style.” The press hopper (right) is crafted of oak and is inspired by Greene & Greene design. The winery was bonded in late 2004 and is the first certified organic winery on the Central Coast.



Bill has a very talented assistant winemaker in Frenchman Jean-Benoit Deslauriers (left). His spirited passion for Pinot Noir comes from Burgundy and his inspiration from the wines of Denis Mortet. Bill and Jean-Benoit both are more interested in crafted wines than technical wines. The philosophy of the Arts & Crafts Movement believed in the unity and beauty of a hand-crafted environment that could affect one’s spirituality. Bill wants to continue this craftsman heritage by employing organic farming, solar power, and use of artesian spring water. Jean-Benoit is an advocate of biodynamic farming. There is a two-acre certified organic vineyard on the property growing Grenache, Syrah and Semillon. Bill plans to add another five acres in the future. He currently sources his Pinot Noir from Richard Sanford’s El Encantada Vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills which is certified organic as well as an sustainably farmed block at Laetitia Vineyards in the Santa Maria Valley.

The **2004 Casa Barranca Santa Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict Vineyard Pinot Noir** released last year was very well received by the wine press and garnered considerable attention. However, Jean-Benoit is striving to produce a more complex and Burgundian-styled Pinot Noir. The two 2005 releases were sampled on the back deck at Casa Barranca. These are both really impressive Pinot Noirs. Some in the Crew preferred one or the other, but both were met with an enthusiastic response. Bill commented that the more restrained style of the 2005 wines was not as popular for some wine lovers and the wines may not garner the same popular scores. For me, personally, I like these wines for their complexity, demure fruitiness, intriguing spiciness, and refined acidity. I think they are moving in the right direction with their winemaking style.

2005 Casa Barranca Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 125 cases, \$25. Aged in 30% new French oak. Black cherries are the feature here in the aromas and on the palate. Spice, sandalwood and red berries add interest.

2005 Casa Barranca Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 1325 cases, \$25. Aged in 40% new oak. The grapes are from Richard Sanford's La Encantada Vineyard. This Pinot is more about blueberries and strawberries with notes of mocha and cedar.



Wines may be ordered on the winery's website, www.casabarranca.com, or by phoning 805-646-7114. Free shipping on orders of six bottles or more. The winery also offers a 2005 Viognier, and some red varietal blends.



Wild Wood Winery & Sinor-Lavelle

Wild Wood Vineyard and Winery is an eighty-acre estate located at the foot of the Cuesta Grade, just north of San Luis Obispo. Vines were planted here by owner Craig Wood in 1999 and include Syrah, Cabernet, Sangiovese, Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir and Alberino. The vineyard has cool morning and evening temperatures with fog, similar to the Edna Valley, combined with afternoon heat resembling the Paso Robles region. The Crew gathered at the winery and Mike Sinor (right) kicked off the festivities with some sage Pinot words.



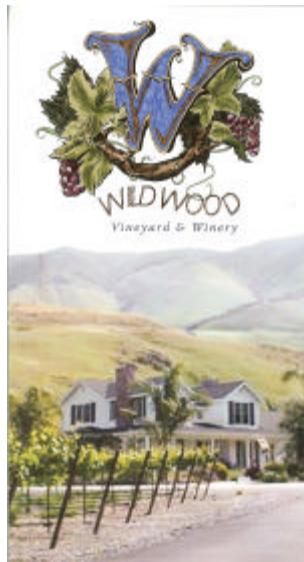
We then headed inside for some serious wine tasting. Craig's family poured his Wild Wood wines: **2002** and

2003 Gina's Vineyard Syrah and **Sheri's Vineyard Syrah**, **2002 Jackson's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon** at the nicely appointed tasting bar (left). These wines were well

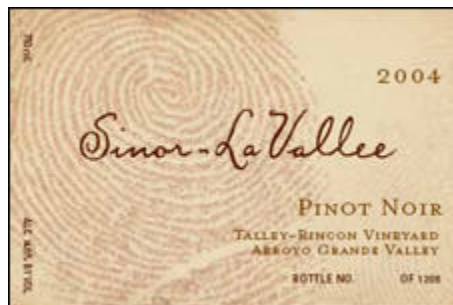
received by the Crew. Mike was pouring his three Sinor-Lavelle Pinot Noirs which I have raved about in a previous issue (*PinotFile*, Vol 5, Issue 36): **2004 Talley-Rincon**, **2004 Aubaine**, and **2004 Anniversary Cuvee**. All three are flamboyant suckers, but the Cuvee is the stuff Pinot dreams are made of. We also sampled some fine Pinot Noirs from local producers, Tolosa and Kynsi. Excellent Santa Maria-style barbecue was catered by Mo's Smokehouse and we dined under the stars. The evening ended with the Crew serenading "Happy Birthday" to the Prince who just turned 40 and Krissy Gendron who claimed to be just 21 (see photo next page).



Wild Wood wines are available on the website, www.wildwoodwine.com, or by phoning 805-546-1088. They are reasonably priced in the \$20-\$25 range. A Pinot Noir will be released this Fall. Mike Sinor is currently making his Sinor-Lavelle wines at Wild Wood Winery.



Sinor-Lavelle wines are sold primarily through a mailing list. The phone number is 805-473-8313. The Pinot Noirs are well-priced at \$35-\$40 a bottle. Mike is known for sporting a different beard and haircut for every harvest. He also has become something of a celebrity winemaker of late. The 2004 wines he made while at Domaine Alfred garnered huge scores in the press. His phone has been constantly ringing with many people clamoring for his services. He plans to limit his consulting, however, to devote his full energies to his own family label. The clever label bears the fingerprints of Mike and his wife Cheri.



Bien Nacido Vineyard

“Bien Nacido is one of those vineyards that’s so famous, it’s almost a brand in itself.”
Steve Heimoff, *Wine Enthusiast*

Not only is Bien Nacido one of California’s most revered vineyards, it may soon find itself in the new California Riviera. Santa Maria recently eclipsed its more famous neighbor to the south, Santa Barbara, and now has more population. Santa Barbara’s high housing prices (median is \$1.05 million) are pushing people north (\$455,000 in Santa Maria). The two cities are separated by only 75 miles, but are a world apart. Santa Maria’s cuisine is Santa Maria BBQ, Santa Barbara’s is California chic. People in Santa Maria drive pickup trucks, in Santa Barbara they prefer German sports cars. Most notably, residents of Santa Barbara drink Pinot Noir, those in Santa Maria make it. Santa Maria is still clearly an agricultural town, but it is rapidly becoming a power center in Santa Barbara County as the population marches north.

Bien Nacido Vineyard has a history closely tied to the Spanish occupation of California. In 1837, a Spanish land grant was made to Tomas Olivera by Juan Bautista Alvarado, then Gobernador of Alta California. This grant included 9,000 acres which were watered by Tepusquet Creek. Tomas Olivera sold Rancho Tepusquet in 1865 to his son-in-law, Don Juan Pacifico Ontiveros who constructed an adobe on the property in 1857 and moved to the ranch. He raised horses, cattle, sheep, grains, and grapes. The Ontiveros Adobe remains today as one of the few privately-owned adobes in California.

The Broome family had extensive central coast agricultural holdings in the 1950s, but lost much of it to cold war military expansions (now Point Magu naval air base). Bob and Steve Miller, fourth generation members of the Broome family scouted much of California looking for ranch land to replace the holdings that were lost. In 1968, they purchased Rancho Tepusquet from the Allan Hancock family. According to Victor W. Geraci (*Salud! The Rise of Santa Barbara’s Wine Industry*), between 1968 and 1972, the Millers planted row crops on the land and saw vineyards prosper nearby at Rancho Sisquoc and the Lucas brother’s 800-acre Tepusquet Vineyards (George Jr. and Louis Lucas were the first to plant Pinot Noir in the Santa Maria Valley in 1970). In 1972, the Millers planted 640 acres of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Merlot under the direction of vineyard manager Dale Hampton. He had pioneered the use of galvanized steel stakes and guide wires for trellising in the vineyard, and when people began calling the Miller’s vineyard a “Cadillac vineyard,” the Millers named the vineyard Bien Nacido - Mexican for ‘being born with a silver spoon in your mouth’ or simply, “been born well.” A few years earlier, the Sanford and Benedict Vineyard had been planted in what is now the Ste. Rita Hills appellation, and the two vineyards became the cornerstones of the Santa Barbara County wine industry.

Whether it was true insight, or simply good fortune, the location of the Bien Nacido Vineyard at Rancho Tepusquet was ideal for cool-climate wine grapes. Numerous California winemakers began to make reputations for themselves with wines made from Bien Nacido grapes. Bob and Steve Miller were very astute businessmen and they developed a method of custom growing wine grapes for small winemakers. It wasn’t long before Au Bon Climat, Hitching Post, Lane Tanner, Qupe, Richard Longoria Wines, and Whitcraft became household names. Bien Nacido had become a brand, a seal of quality. As Jordan Mackay wrote in *Wine & Spirits* (February, 2003), “Bien Nacido became the literal and spiritual home of Santa Barbara’s wine community.

Most of California's vineyards are shielded from the Pacific Ocean by the state's north-south coastal range of mountains. Just west of the Santa Maria Valley, however, a line of east-west mountains exposes the valley to the maritime influence of the Pacific Ocean only seventeen miles away. The result is that temperatures are moderate in the summer, evenings and mornings are cool and the grapes ripen very slowly. James Ontiveros explained the vineyard's unique topography and geography to the Crew (below). He noted that the vineyard has spawned a bunch of "lazy wine-makers." All they have to do to make wine is add yeast to the grapes. The vines are balanced, no watering back high alcohols is necessary, and the resultant wines have bright acidity and good flavor.



The Bien Nacido Vineyard has three distinct areas: (1) the canyon where the river and adobe are located and where sandy alluvial deposits make up the soil, (2) the benchland, which is a mixture of loam and shale, and (3) the hillsides, which have a heavier soil. Today, there are over 720 acres planted at Bien Nacido, with over 300 acres planted to Chardonnay, over 250 acres to Pinot Noir, and a number of acres to Pinot Blanc, Syrah, and Merlot. Since 1992, there have been numerous experimental plantings of several other varieties such as Nebbiolo, Viognier, and Pinot Gris, as well as newer clones of Pinot Noir. The available land for planting is now essentially used up. Five more acres of Pinot Noir are going in on the last available land in the hillsides. The Millers have developed Solomon Hills Vineyard, seven miles to the west, which is Santa Maria Valley's westernmost vineyard. Planting here is 90% Pinot Noir and 10% Chardonnay. They also farm the French Camp Vineyard located in a warmer area of the valley planted to Cabernet and Sauvignon Blanc (no Pinot Noir).

Pictured below is the famed Q Block of Pinot Noir.



The Millers now sell grapes to 55 wineries. Bien Nacido Vineyard is quite unique in that winemakers lease the same rows and same blocks every year. There are 28 blocks of Pinot Noir, roughly 10 acres to the block, all planted with different rootstock, clones, and planting patterns. The original blocks were set out with consideration for irrigation needs. The big blocks are sold to winemakers by rows, and the smaller blocks by the acre. An extensive map of the blocks at Bien Nacido Vineyard is posted on the vineyard's website at www.biennacidovineyards.com. Bien Nacido Vineyards is the largest California planting of certified mother vines from U.C. Davis. It is one of the major viticultural nurseries in the state for certified, varietal budwood. Much of the Chardonnay planted in California in the last twenty years began as Bien Nacido Vineyard cuttings.

The winemakers direct the viticulture for their rows/blocks (pruning, leaf removal, canopy management, etc.) within reason under the direction of vineyard manager, Chris Hammell. Picking can be a logistic nightmare because naturally many winemakers choose to pick on the same day and want the grapes picked early in the morning. At Bien Nacido, they have begun to pick at night, usually about 2:00 AM, under bright lights, and are able to get the grapes in trucks and on the road by 4:00 AM. The grapes below are from Q Block. Note the pine cone or "pinot" shape of the Pinot Noir clusters.



Four wineries have facilities located on the Bien Nacido property: Au Bon Climat, Qupe, Tantara, and Ambullneo (the latter pictured below).



The Millers were visionaries who knew the importance of nurturing small winemakers. They built the Central Coast Wine Services in 1989 in Santa Maria to assist boutique wineries. The 2220,000 sq ft facility has become a dormitory for over twenty-five small wineries (ie Hitching Post, Lane Tanner, Red Car) who share equipment, storage, and lab analysis. A similar facility is now open in Paso Robles (Paso Robles Wine Services).

After our extensive tour of Bien Nacido Vineyard, the Crew assembled at the Ontiveros Adobe (below) for tasting of wines from the vineyard and lunch.



Our hosts for the day were Nicholas Miller and James Ontiveros. Nicholas Miller is the son of Steve Miller. He has been in charge of the family business since 2004 and concentrates on the marketing and public relations of the vineyard operation. He is committed to state of the art viticulture at the Bien Nacido Vineyard and insuring that wines bearing the Bien Nacido Vineyard designation on their label maintain the vineyard's reputation for quality. James Ontiveros is the Director of Sales and Marketing for all of the Miller's vineyards as well as Central Coast and Paso Robles Wine Services. He is a native of the Santa Maria Valley and a descendent of the pioneering family that once owned the land grant on which Bien Nacido Vineyard is located.

Five winemakers poured their Bien Nacido and Solomon Hills wines. Pictured in front of the Ontiveros Adobe L to R are: Jeff Wilkes (J. Wilkes), Greg Linn (Ambullneo), James Ontiveros (Native 9 - from Rancho Ontiveros Vineyard), Jeff White (Ovene), and Nicholas Miller. Bill Cates (Tantara) is pictured on the next page.





Bill Cates (capless) is the co-owner, with fellow Virginian, Jeff Finks of Tantara. They have been friends for over twenty years and converged in California in 1997 to produce Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the Bien Nacido Vineyard. At the lunch, Bill told the story of how the winery was named. It seems Tantara was the name of a horse Bill Cates owned some years ago. After Tantara was retired to pasture, she defied predictions of an imminent demise and lived to a ripe old age. Horses symbolize elegance, grace and power and in Tantara's case, long life, all of which are qualities Tantara embraces for their wines.

Jeff Wilkes spent his formative years in Newport Beach and raced sailboats with the Millers. He worked in vineyard management at Bien Nacido for eighteen years before starting his own label a few years ago. Jeff White is a resident of Yorba Linda in Orange County who makes his wines out of a dormitory space at Central Coast Wine Services. Greg Linn is a pinot geek extraordinaire who recently relocated from Yorba Linda to Santa Maria. James Ontiveros has his own vineyard, Rancho Ontiveros, which interestingly enough, was planted in part by Mike Sinor, now of Sinor-Lavelle (small world). Each of the winemakers addressed the Crew after lunch and I wish I had had my recorder because their comments were ridiculously funny.

What is the Bien Nacido flavor profile? Because each of the wineries that source grapes from Bien Nacido employ different farming methods and utilize unique winemaking styles, there is considerable individual variation in the wines among different producers. However, Jim Clendenen of Au Bon Climat claims that he can taste wines blind and pick out the ones from Bien Nacido. The flavor profile is red fruits (cherry, raspberry), spice (cardamom, cinnamon stick, clove, white or black pepper), fine tannins, and good acidity. The element of hard spice is always there. Often an herbal note is evident in wines from newer plantings. The older vines produce wines that are more acid driven and the newer vines seem to lead to wines that are more tannin driven. There are more black fruits in newer vines, more red fruits in older vines. As the wines age, the winemaker's style is more noticeable.

We asked James about the possibility of a Bien Nacido brand of wines. He said that Bob and Steve Miller never intended to have their own brand and so far there has been no move in that direction. However, Nicholas Miller has said in the press that he has a strong allure to starting a high-end line of limited production wines under the Bien Nacido brand. Time will tell.

It was a magical afternoon sitting outdoors sampling these terrific wines and feasting on the luncheon prepared by talented chef, Rick Manson of Chef Rick's Ultimately Fine Foods in Santa Maria. The photo right shows Chef Rick addressing the group (see if you can find the Prince in the photo).



On the way home, we visited Solomon Hills Vineyard which is located within a stone's throw of Hwy 99. This is the most recently developed vineyard in the Miller's portfolio, planted in the late 1990s. It is close to the Pacific Ocean and enjoys daily ocean breezes which make it the coolest vineyard in the Santa Maria Valley. The vineyard shares common soil with the famed Sierra Madre Vineyards now owned by Caymus (Belle Glos Pinot Noir). The Pinot Noir from this vineyard has been of extremely high quality. Producers sourcing grapes from Solomon Hills include Ambullneo, Flying Goat, J. Wilkes, Ojai Vineyards, Paul Lato, Rusack, and Wild Horse. See the photos on the next page.



Note bird netting over the grapes above. At the right, the Princess is talking Pinot with Nicholas Miller.



A few die hards among the Crew and pushed on to Central Coast Wine Services in Santa Maria. Here we were hosted by Jeff White of Ovene and barrel sampled multiple 2005 vintage wines.



That evening, the Crew gathered in the lobby of The Cliffs Resort and drank some more Pinot with the tasty pizza from Guiseppe's in Pismo Beach. All in all, it was one heck of a Pinot Camp. I wish they had these kind of summer camps when I was a kid.



Old Edna

Exploring the quaint wine regions of Edna Valley and Arroyo Grande can make for a terrific getaway. Patty and I spent a couple days recuperating from Pinot Summer Camp in the Edna Valley. Ex-duke and the wife of ex-duke tagged along. After lunching outdoors on fish tacos at Fat Cat's Café on the Port San Luis Pier in Avila Beach, we headed over to the Avila Valley Barn to pick up supplies for dinner. This place is really hopping because of the variety of local produce available. Then it was off to Suite Edna Bed & Breakfast on Old Price Canyon Road in the heart of the Edna Valley. Suite Edna (below) is a lovingly restored 1200 sq ft farmhouse built by the Tognazzini family in 1908. It features three bedrooms and a large farmhouse kitchen.



The original stagecoach road that linked San Luis Obispo and Pismo Beach runs through the property (Pismo Boulevard). Next door is the MacGregor Vineyard planted to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay (currently for sale) with gorgeous views of the Edna Valley. A gourmet café is housed in a two story tin building steps away from Suite Edna (will be open under new owners soon). On the grounds are a gypsy wagon, a quaint dining room (pictured), a treehouse (pictured), and a peacock and rooster that remind you that you are in the country. A wine cellar is being built under the house.



The heart and soul of this lovely historical spot is Pattea Torrence (center, below) who has revived the historic tin building (abandoned for over 20 years) and the farmhouse. She owns and manages the entire Edna townsite with her father, The Duke. When we arrived, she met us with some Sinor-Lavelle Syrah and made our stay completely comfortable.



The location is ideal. Just minutes away are terrific restaurants in San Luis Obispo, Avila Beach, and Arroyo Grande. Several notable wineries are close by including Domaine Alfred, Talley Vineyards, Laetitia, Kynsi Winery, Stephen Ross, Wild Wood Vineyard & Winery (and Sinor-Lavelle), and Ortman Family Vineyards.

Sunday evening we cooked some hardy pasta with fresh sausage in the farmhouse kitchen. We sat around the table in the kitchen feeling like we were at our grandmother's house. Corks were popped, and we enjoyed a Kistler Kistler Vineyard Chardonnay, a Littorai Theriot Vineyard Pinot Noir, and a Domaine Leroy Vosne Romanee les Genavrieries.

Wine Cottage Bistro

Our final stop before returning to the OC was Old Town Orcutt, just west of Santa Maria. Here Rebecca Jacobs and Aimee Sigala have created a wine-inspired haven for gourmands. Rebecca and Aimee used to spend many Friday evenings together sipping wine, sharing a meal, and dreaming of a way to combine their love of good wine, food, family and friends. Rebecca's husband designed and remodeled the old Union Supply building on South Broadway into a comfy space with quaint, yet elegant dining. The walls are lined with local art, a cozy wine bar frames one side of the restaurant, and a garden patio is out back for a more casual setting. An extensive wine list is constantly evolving to work with the seasonally inspired menu. Home-made foccacia and baguettes, wood-oven baked pizzas, and a variety of salads, and small and large plates are featured. We chowed down well with a bottle of Flying Goat Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir. (Rebecca welcomes at the wine bar below).



Wineries & Vineyards

- Casa Barranca** www.casabarranca.com, 805-646-7114
- Wild Wood Vineyards & Winery** 555 El Camino Real, San Luis Obispo 93401, www.wildwoodwine.com, 805-546-1088
- Sinor-Lavelle** PO Box 701, Arroyo Grande 93421, www.sinorlavelle.com, 805-473-8313
- Ambullneo** www.ambullneovineyards.com,
- J. Wilkes** 342 Oliver Rd, Santa Barbara 93109, jwilkeswine.com, 805-899-2845
- Native 9/Rancho Ontiveros Vineyard** 6525 Dominion Rd, Santa Maria 93454, www.native9wine.com, 805-937-1991
- Ovene Winery** 2717 Aviation Way, Suite E29, Santa Maria 93455, 714-420-2525
- Tantara** 4747 Ontiveros Lane, Santa Maria 93454, www.tantarawinery.com, 805-938-5050

- Bien Nacido Vineyards** Nicholas L. Miller, www.nmiller@nbesb.com, 805-969-5803 x 126. The vineyard website is www.biennacidovineyards.com
- Solomon Hills Vineyard** www.solomonhillsvineyard.com

Restaurants & Caterers

- Mo's Smokehouse BBQ** 3924 Carissa Court, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 (also in Huntington Beach, CA), 805-550-8071
- Chef Rick's Ultimately Fine Foods** 4869 South Bradley Road, Santa Maria 93455, 805-937-9512
- Fat Cat's Café** Port San Luis Pier, Avila Beach, 805-595-2204
- Wine Cottage Bistro** 285 S Broadway, Orcutt, 93455, 805-934-4546

Lodging

- The Cliffs Resort** 2357 Shell Beach Rd, Shell Beach 93449, www.cliffsresort.com, 800-826-7827
- Old Edna Suite Bed & Breakfast** Pattea Torrence, 1655 Old Price Canyon Road, San Luis Obispo 93401, www.oldedna.com, 805-544-8062




PrinceofPinot.com

Many thanks to Steve Siglin and Sonia Liekhus who supplied several photographs for this issue

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This winery pickup lives on in Orcutt

More New California Pinot Noir Releases

Brewer-Clifton The 2005 vintage represents the tenth harvest for this producer of fine Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the Sta. Rita Hills. One of California's true cult Pinot Noirs is available by mailing list only. **2005 Brewer-Clifton Ashley's Vineyard Pinot Noir** 912 cases, \$48, **2005 Brewer-Clifton Cargasacchi Vineyard Pinot Noir** 576 cases, \$56, and **2005 Brewer-Clifton Mount Carmel Vineyard Pinot Noir** 912 cases, \$60. The Mount Carmel Vineyard is farmed by Brewer-Clifton as a monopole. Pinot Noirs from Clos Pepe Vineyard, Melville Vineyard, Rancho Santa Rosa Vineyard, and Rio Vista Vineyard will be released in February, 2007. The website is www.brewerclifton.com and the phone is 805-735-9184. The wines are made in the Lompoc Wine Ghetto at 1704 Industrial Way, Lompoc 93463.

Rhys Vineyards The inaugural release is now being offered to mailing list customers. Initial press coverage of the wines have been very positive. According to Allen Meadows (aka Burghound.com), "These wines are already special but as the vines mature and the Rhys team understands better how to maximize the full potential of their fruit, I predict they will become among the reference standards for Pinot Noir." Rhys Vineyards was featured in the *PinotFile* last year. There are two labels here, Rhys ('Reese') which are wines made from estate managed vineyards, and Alesia ("A-leez-ee-a") which are wines made from non-estate vineyards. At present there is only a few hundred bottles of Rhys wines for sale but by the 2006 and 2007 vintages the young vineyards will come into production and there should be plenty of Rhys wines available. **2004 Rhys Home Vineyard Pinot Noir**, **2004 Alesia Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** \$39, and **2004 Alesia Kanzler Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** \$39. 230 Family Farm Road, Woodside 94062. Sign up for the mailing list at www.rhysvineyard.com.

